Met Office leading space weather forecasting capability

07 February 2013 - The Met Office welcomes the Royal Academy of Engineering report on Space Weather, the UK's first in-depth study of the impacts of space weather.

The report concludes that whilst the space weather risk can be engineered out of many systems, there is a still a need for real-time alerting and forecasting of space weather to help minimise the risks it poses.

The UK Government has already made an investment in the development of a space weather prediction capability within the Met Office's existing scientific and forecasting capabilities.

Mark Gibbs, Met Office Space Weather Business Manager, said: "Space weather is a relatively immature science but understanding is growing rapidly and here at the Met Office we are working with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Space Weather Prediction Centre in the US. This collaboration aims to enable both organisations to accelerate the development of improved space weather models and prediction systems to make more effective use of space weather data."

Through this work the Met Office is currently developing a real-time space weather warning service on behalf of the UK.

Working with partners such as the UK Space Agency and the British Geological Survey, the Met Office will be able to provide warnings of space weather so that government, businesses and the public can take steps to protect themselves from its impacts.

Space weather can impact the performance of the electricity grid, satellites, GPS systems, aviation and perhaps mobile communications.

The Royal Academy of Engineering report supports the work already taking place across Government, industry, academia and with international partners to fully understand this risk, the nature of any possible impacts and what mitigation action is needed as a result.

The Met Office is central to coordinating action to understand and minimise the risk and potential impacts from space weather. As a result, the Met Office will continue to work across government to develop and improve our understanding of the potential impacts of space weather to enable government and industry to take steps to improve our resilience.

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